

# 2011-12

## Annual Report



Tulare County

Sheriff's Department

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# Letter from the Sheriff

One of the main functions of the Sheriff's Department is to operate the Tulare County Jail System. That job got a lot more difficult on October 1, 2011, when the state implemented AB 109, also known as California Public Safety Realignment. As a result of AB 109, thousands of offenders who formerly would have been sent to state prison now serve their sentences in County jails around the state.

Tulare County was initially in a better position to accommodate AB 109 inmates than many other jail systems around California. That's because the Tulare County Adult Pre-Trial Facility had several "pods" (with space for more than 150 beds) unopened.

However, those beds quickly filled up as the jail system absorbed the AB 109 inmates. By the close of the fiscal year on June 30, 2012, our jail system was at maximum capacity, and the Department was expanding our alternative-to-custody programs to place low-level offenders.

Help is on the way. In April 2012, the state awarded the County a \$60 million grant to build a 500-bed jail in Porterville. However, it will be several years before that facility is open. In the interim, the jail system must continue to cope with the influx of AB 109 inmates.

Meanwhile, the Department has devoted significant resources to combat illegal marijuana cultivators and traffickers. In recent years, illegal marijuana has become a billion-dollar industry in the County. Our deputies, with help from other local, state, and federal law enforcement organizations, have eradicated hundreds of thousands of marijuana plants. During Fiscal 2011-12, much of the production shifted from the Sierra-Nevada foothill and mountain groves to backyards and agricultural land on the Valley floor.

While the Department struggles to meet the demands of State Realignment and illegal marijuana, we still have to perform our other duties – patrolling rural areas, solving crimes, ensuring safety in the County's court system, serving legal papers on behalf of the public, and the numerous other tasks that the citizens of Tulare County have come to expect from the Department. The 503 deputies and 185 civilian staff of the Department deliver those services every day at a very high level. I am proud to serve with them.



**Bill Wittman**

# Mission, Vision, and Values

## *Mission Statement*

The mission of the Tulare County Sheriff's Department is to improve the quality of life through professional services and community partnerships.

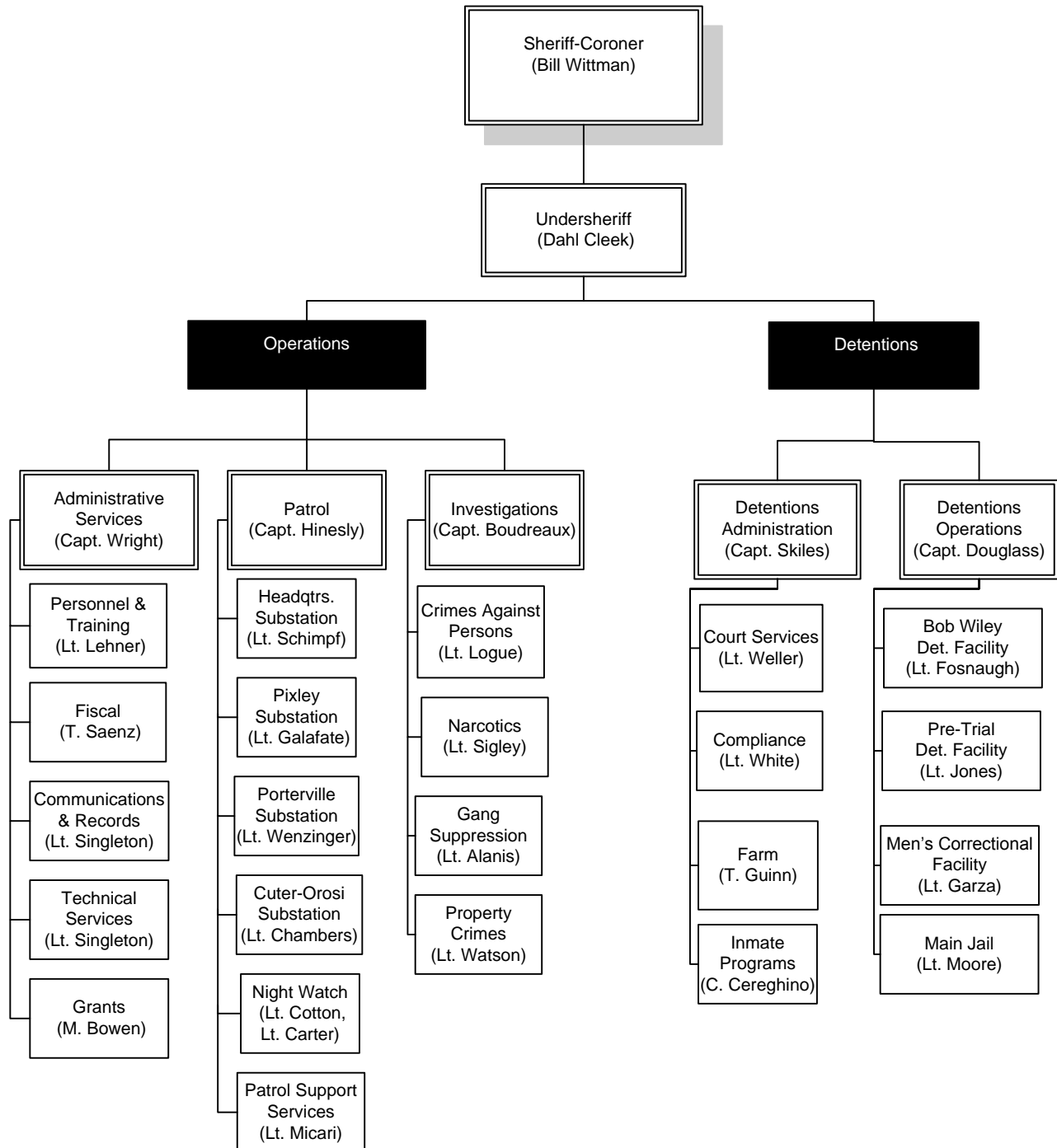
## *Vision Statement*

The vision of the Tulare County Sheriff's Department is to provide quality service to the community and be recognized as the regional leader among law enforcement agencies by utilizing the latest in policing technologies, maintaining professional employees, and demonstrating innovation and operational flexibility.

## *Core Values*

- **Integrity:** We are committed to uphold our position of trust by maintaining the highest ethical standards as set forth in the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics.
- **Community Safety:** We are committed to public safety through community partnerships, preparedness, crime prevention strategies and steadfast enforcement of violations of the law.
- **Customer Service:** We are committed to prompt, professional, and courteous service, unbiased and effective in our response to community concerns.
- **Quality:** We are committed to the highest standards of excellence through recruitment, training, teamwork, leadership, innovation and accountability.
- **Organization:** We value our members and have confidence in their individual initiative and ability to solve problems. We believe open, honest, and sincere communication is critical to a healthy work environment. We take pride and receive satisfaction from doing our very best. We recognize the importance of each team member, and do our utmost to encourage and assist one another to develop as individuals and professionals. We acknowledge teamwork as the key to attaining our goals.
- **Families:** We rely upon the support of our families and friends as we serve in an ever-changing and challenging world. The values we hold dear at home we also strive to share with the community: caring, honesty, fairness, stability, and friendship.

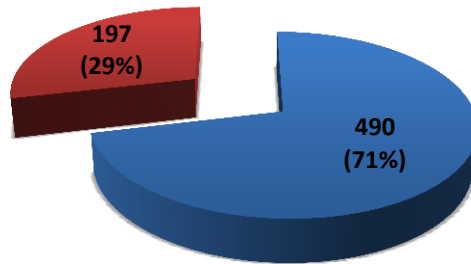
# Organizational Chart



## Staffing

### Tulare County Sheriff's Dept.

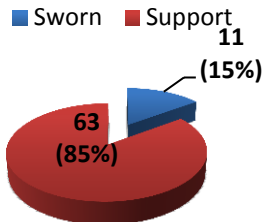
Total Staff: 687  
■ Sworn ■ Support



### Administrative Services

Total Staff: 74

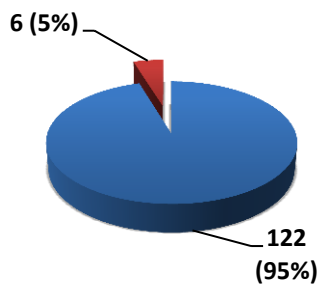
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### Patrol

Total Staff: 128

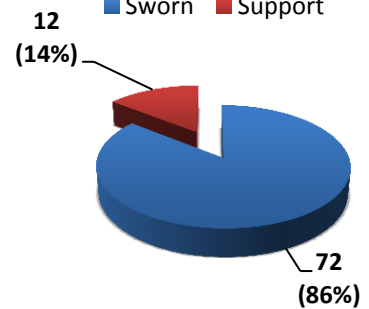
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### Investigations

Total Staff: 84

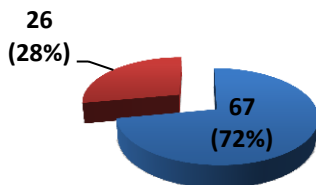
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### Detentions Administration

Total Staff: 93

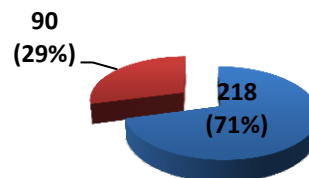
■ Sworn ■ Support



### Detentions Operations

Total Staff: 308

■ Sworn ■ Support





# Administrative Services

The Administrative Services division performs critical support functions that keep the Sheriff's Department running smoothly. Capt. Gregory Wright commands the division. His management staff includes a fiscal manager, two lieutenants, and a grants specialist. The division is composed of the Department's business office, personnel and training, technical services, dispatch center, records, and grants.

Here are some specifics on each unit:

- **Business Office:** The Sheriff's Business Office handles the day-to-day fiscal responsibilities for the Department. That includes accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, fiscal control of contracts, grant accounting, inmate welfare trust accounting, and the Department's monthly financial statements.
- **Communications Center:** When a person dials "911" within the Sheriff's jurisdiction, one of the Department's emergency dispatchers answers the line. The Sheriff's Communications Center is located inside Department headquarters. As the Communications Center is staffed around-the-clock 365 days a year, dispatchers also field emergency calls for service during



The Sheriff's Communications Centers fields calls for service from the general public 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

nights and weekends for several small cities in the County which can only afford to staff their dispatch centers during business hours on weekdays. The Sheriff's dispatchers swiftly forward calls regarding fires and requests for medical aid to County Fire and ambulance services,

respectively. When a call involves a crime, a domestic disturbance, a heated dispute between neighbors, or another pressing matter, the Communications Center quickly dispatches a patrol deputy to the scene. Each dispatcher wears a headset to communicate on dedicated public safety frequencies to patrol deputies. The dispatcher also has computer keyboard to take notes on specifics of each call. Several computer monitors at each dispatch workstation track the location of each patrol car, status of the patrol unit in responding to its current call for service, and other critical data. During 2010, the Communications Center fully implemented equipment and software upgrades to pinpoint the geographic location of calls from cell phones to more efficiently dispatch deputies to the scene. The Center now also has the capability to alert residents when a disaster, such as a flood, has occurred nearby and threatens the area. The alerts are recorded messages with important information on how to minimize injury or property loss from the disaster.

- **Grant Unit:** The Sheriff's Department operates a variety of local, state, and federal grant programs. The Department's grants specialist is charged with seeking new grant funding and renewing existing grants. The specialist works closely with Sheriff's management, the Department's fiscal staff, a variety of County departments, other law enforcement agencies, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, and other entities to prepare proposals and ensure that grants comply with County contract requirements. Additionally, the specialist generates management reports, composes letters of support, provides photography, and performs other duties.
- **Internal Affairs:** This subunit of Personnel Training conducts investigations of possible misconduct by Sheriff's deputies and civilian staff.
- **Personnel & Training:** This unit coordinates hiring, training, promotions, responses to media inquiries regarding the Sheriff's Department, and, when necessary, internal investigations of Sheriff's staff members. The unit works closely with Human Resources & Development division of County government on posting of open positions and to comply with other personnel regulations of the County. Due to the sensitive nature of law enforcement, a background check was performed on each applicant, including volunteers, who join the Department's staff. The unit also coordinates classes, workshops, and other training for Sheriff's staff during the year. This includes regular firearms instruction to sworn officers at the Sheriff's practice range in Tulare to maintain state proficiency standards for firearms usage. Much of the rest of the training also was performed so that Department personnel meet or continue state training standards for peace officers. Personnel & Training tracks Workers Compensation claims, medical leave, and injuries (not work-related) of Sheriff's employees.



- **Property & Evidence.** This subcomponent of Personnel & Training is responsible for cataloging and preservation of evidence collected by Sheriff's deputies and detectives during criminal investigations.
- **Records Department:** The Sheriff's Records Department functions as a service center for requests from Department staff, other government agencies, and the general public. Records serves as a library for outstanding criminal warrants, criminal histories on inmates in the County jail system, and other Department documents.
- **Technical Services:** Modern-day Sheriff's departments are dependent on a variety of computerized systems to carry out its public safety mandate. The Technical Services unit is charged with keeping the hundreds of laptop and desktop computers in the Department in good working order. The unit also troubleshoots a diverse assortment of software and criminal justice databases that run on those computers. As the Sheriff's Department is a division of County government, Technical Services works very closely with the County's Information Technology division to keep critical electronic pathways running smoothly to the County's computer servers, where much of the data generated by the Sheriff's Department is stored. Technical Services also works with a number of vendors who supply computer products to the Department.

Also under Technical Services is the Department's Crime Analyst and the 911 Coordinator. The Analyst compiles and analyzes crime statistics for the Sheriff's jurisdiction. The 911 Coordinator updates the Department's database on addresses within the Sheriff's jurisdiction, and networks with counterparts across the state for new equipment and software to incorporate into the Department's emergency dispatching operations.

## In Focus

**EZ Kiosk adds convenience for families and trims staff time**

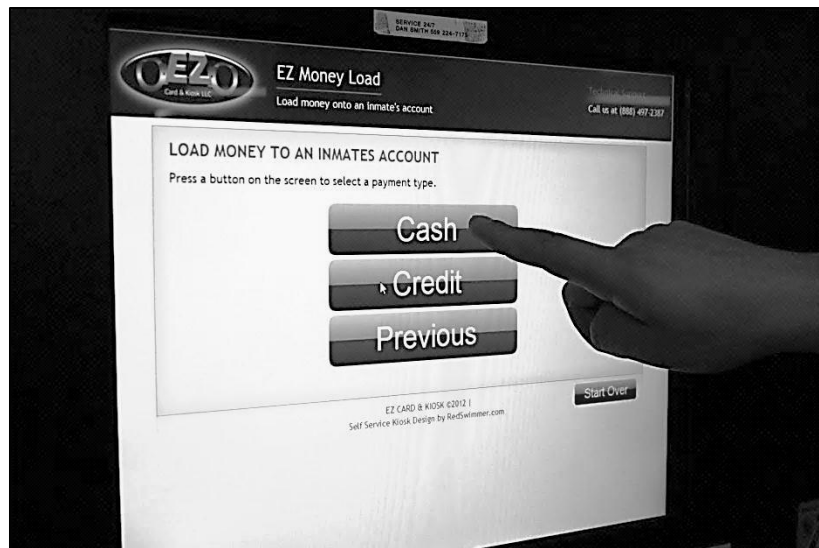
An electronic system is providing a more efficient way for families to give cash to their loved ones in jail for commissary items, such as chips, fast-food, and snacks. At the same time, the ATM-like system is eliminating hundreds of hours a year in hand-processing of such monetary donations by Sheriff's deputies and accounting staff. System users can also make bail payments for offenders.

The new system is called EZ Kiosk. The manufacturer, EZ Card and Kiosk, installed EZ Kiosk machines in the lobbies of the Men's Correctional Center, the Tulare County Adult Pre-Trial Facility, and

the Bob Wiley Detention Facility in September 2011. Patrons insert cash or use a credit card to donate to inmate accounts when using the machines. For added convenience, there are actual ATM machines located next to the EZ Kiosk machines to allow patrons to withdraw cash from a bank account and then deposit to the inmate account of their choice.

Users can also access EZ Kiosk by telephone at (888-497-2387) or the Internet ([www.ezmoneyload.com](http://www.ezmoneyload.com)).

The system handled 19,761 transactions between September 2011 and the close of the fiscal year on June 30, 2012. The new system also generated some revenue for the Department, which receives 50 cents per transaction. That translated to \$9,880.50 for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2012.



# Patrol

The Patrol Division patrols unincorporated areas of Tulare County. Captain Jim Hinesly commands the division. There are 17 sergeants, four lieutenants (each commanding one substation), two night-watch lieutenants, and a support services lieutenant.

The department's patrol area is extensive -- roughly the size of the State of Connecticut. The average patrol beat is approximately 250 square miles. This rural landscape is home to around 150,000 people. Thousands more people visit the area each year to visit relatives, enjoy the County's two national parks, national forests, and for business or employment.

The division has 119 deputies that offer around-the-clock coverage of this agricultural and mountainous terrain 365 days a year. These patrol deputies are based in four substations: (1) Visalia, based at Sheriff's headquarters; (2) Cutler-Orosi; (3) Porterville; and (4) Pixley.

The standard patrol car the Department uses is a white Ford Crown Victoria sedan. For the most part, it's one deputy per car at a time. Each deputy works a 12-hour shift. However, patrol



The average patrol beat area for the Sheriff's Department is 250 square miles.

cars are typically used 24 hours a day. At the end of the shift, the deputy hands the keys to the deputy on the next shift.

The patrol division responds to all calls for service from the general public – everything from petty thefts to homicides. The division’s deputies interview victims, witnesses, and alleged suspects; write crime incident reports; and, when necessary, take people in custody and transport them to jail. As appropriate, the deputies refer cases to one of the Department’s investigative units for further scrutiny. The deputies also testify in later court trials on their cases.

The Patrol Division contains a number of specialized units:

- **Aviation Unit:** The Aero Squadron uses sworn staff and volunteers to provide aerial surveillance on Department investigations. The unit’s resources got a significant boost with the addition of a “light sport” aircraft to assist in patrol, search-and-rescue and investigation operations of the Department. The small plane is fuel-efficient, but packed with sophisticated law enforcement technology, such as infrared equipment to pinpoint suspects on the ground and relay the location to deputies nearby.
- **River Patrol:** This unit, based out of the Cutler-Orosi Substation, patrols the Kings River along the northern border of Tulare County. The unit gets busy between Memorial Day and Labor Day – when snowmelt from the Sierra-Nevada Mountains brings residents and visitors alike out in large numbers to swim, fish, pilot an assortment of watercraft and otherwise enjoy the river. The River Patrol unit enforces local and state laws for use of public waterways. The unit also comes to the aid of people in danger of drowning or in other distress. The unit got some improved tools with grant-funded purchases: a new boat and two new jet skis.
- **Dive Team:** The Sheriff’s Dive Team is made up of deputies who are certified as Scuba divers. Team members enter the County’s lakes, canals, and rivers to recover evidence in crime cases; rescue drowning people; and recover bodies. The team often operates in waters with zero or near-zero visibility and swift currents. The divers also encounter frigid water temperatures during winter and early spring. The unit often teams up with the Department’s Search-and-Rescue (SAR) squad on swift-water rescues and body recoveries.
- **Region V Mutual Aid Coordination:** The Sheriff’s Department functions as the Region V Mutual Aid Coordinator for the California Emergency Management Agency. Region V consists of seven counties in the San Joaquin Valley – from Kern County north to Madera County. The Department’s coordination role is handled by a patrol lieutenant, who fields requests for assistance from law enforcement units throughout Region V.
- **Bomb Disposal Unit:** The Department’s highly trained Bomb Disposal Unit safely handles and disposes of improvised explosive devices, commercial explosives, military



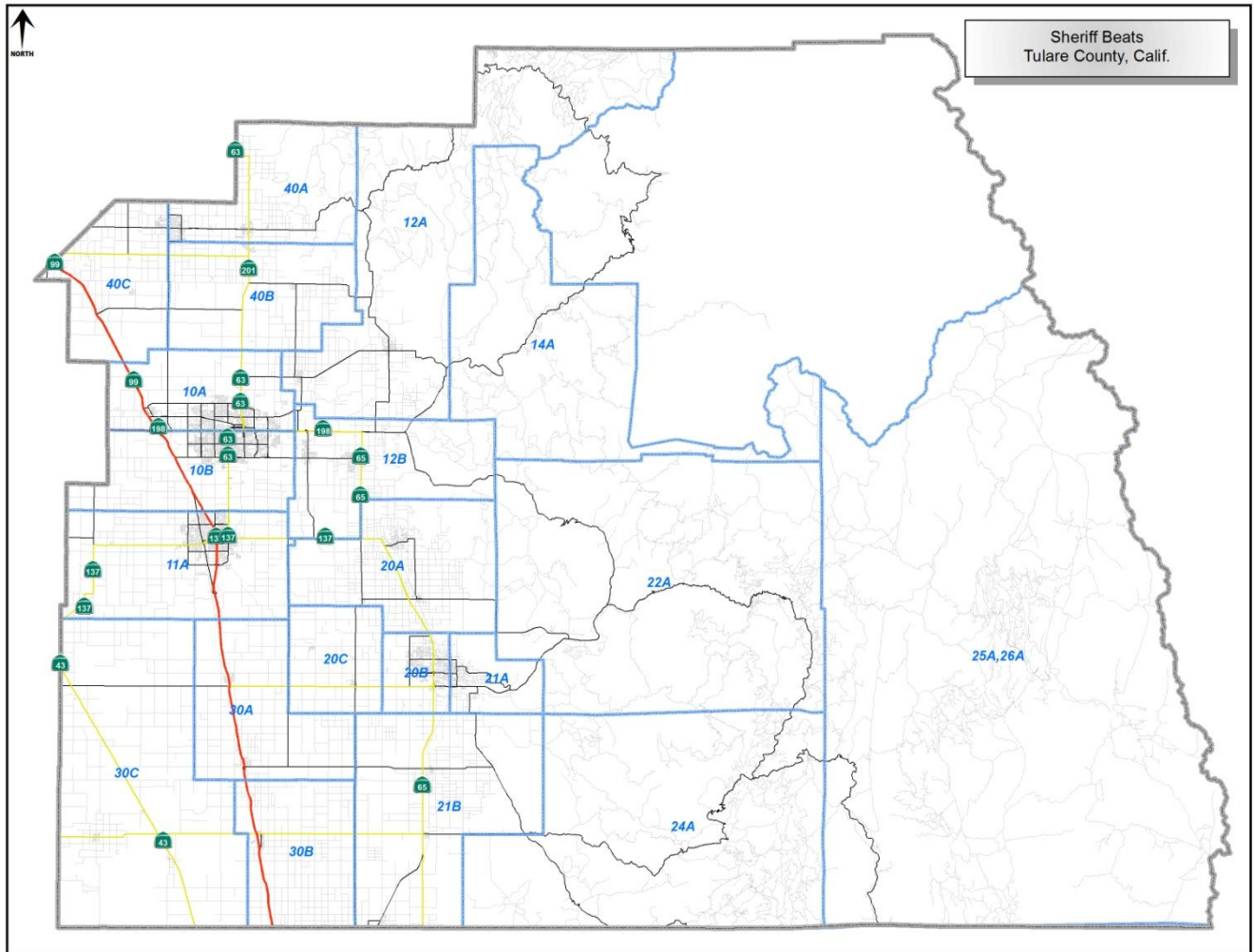
ordinance, suspicious packages/letter, and hoax devices. The unit's equipment includes heavily padded bomb suits, specialized bomb disposal tools, and a state-of-the-art bomb disposal robot purchased with Homeland Security funds. The Sheriff's Bomb Unit entered into an agreement in 2010 with the Visalia Police Department's bomb unit to share resources, increasing the efficiency of both groups.

- **K-9 Unit:** The Department has eight specially trained dogs to assist deputies. Each dog is paired and lives with a deputy, who also receives training in working with these animals. Dogs, of course, possess an enhanced sense of smell compared to their human counterparts. The training these animals receive helps each dog to use its natural gifts to assist the Department locate suspects or evidence in crimes. Seven of the Department's canines assist patrol deputies search buildings for crime suspects and evidence. One of these dog has special training to assist the Department's bomb unit in identifying explosive devices. Another dog has received additional training to sniff out illegal drugs for the Department's narcotics unit. The narcotics unit also has another dog exclusively devoted to detecting drugs at crime scenes. The Department's canines and their handlers compete against counterparts from other law enforcement agencies. Each spring, the Sheriff's Department and the Visalia Police Department host the Sierra K-9 Trials, which draws law enforcement canine units from across the state and is the longest-running canine competition for law enforcement on the West Coast.
- **Search and Rescue:** The Department has a dedicated group of trained deputies and volunteers that form its search-and-rescue unit (SAR). SAR is charged with hastening the recovery of injured or stranded County residents and visitors. A large percentage of the Sheriff's jurisdiction is made up of wild and rugged terrain in Sequoia National Forest (327,000 acres) and Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (combined total of 402,000 acres). Scores of volunteers contribute hundreds of hours to SAR missions.
- **Volunteers:** The Department is truly fortunate to have the free services from hundreds of public spirited citizens. These volunteers perform a diverse number of activities that contribute to the Department's public safety mission from front-line duties (such as participation in search-and-rescue operations) to behind-the-scenes efforts (such as clerical work at substations). The main volunteer programs that serve the Department include:
  - **Volunteers in Patrol:** Scores of people are active in the Sheriff's Volunteers in Patrol (VIP) program. The VIPs pick up and deliver mail, reports and other items between Sheriff's installations around the County. They relay patrol cars to substations, or drive them for service or repair to the County motor pool or car dealers. They provide traffic control at crime scenes and support functions with special enforcement operations. They assist with Department search-and-rescue operations, perform clerical duties at headquarters and substations; and provide essential support for the Department in other ways.
  - **Sheriff's Posse:** This group of volunteers represents the Department through

appearances, typically on horseback, at parades and other special events.

- **Chaplains:** Scores of chaplains volunteer their services for the Department. Most of these provide Bible study and mentoring to inmates at the Sheriff's jails. A smaller group of chaplains rides along with patrol deputies to provide comfort for crime victims. Chaplains also are on hand to provide counsel to Sheriff's staff at times of stress. Additionally, two chaplains from Good News Jail & Prison Ministry are paid by the Inmate Trust Fund and other sources to provide counseling to inmates. These chaplains also assist with training and supervision of the volunteer chaplains who work in the jails. By the way, all volunteers in the jails must attend an annual training session which covers safety and other special considerations of working with inmates.
- **Drug and alcohol counselors:** Volunteers from Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous work with inmates at the jails who have drug or alcohol problems. The Narcotics Anonymous volunteers also assist with the Department Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program, a successful program for inmates with a history of substance abuse.
- **Sequoia Mountain Rescue:** This group of volunteers specializes in difficult rescues in alpine environments. They work closely with the Department's search-and-rescue unit on cases where hikers, fishermen, and others need assistance in rough terrain of the Sierra-Nevada Mountains.
- **Sheriff's Explorers:** The Sheriff's Department operates Explorer Post 355. The post is affiliated with Boy Scouts of America. The Explorer program provides career-related skill development for youth, ages 14 to 21 years old. The Sheriff's Explorer post has a total of 95 members. Each substation has a subgroup of this membership. Deputies supervise each Explorer meeting and activities. The youth receive training in law enforcement skills, such as report writing, police radio operation, and communications. Additionally, the Explorers are trained in simulated law enforcement scenarios – such as stopping vehicles containing people who have just committed a felony or dealing with medical emergencies. The post takes part in competitions with other posts, which measures law enforcement skills, teamwork and individual skills. The Sheriff's post hosts an annual Explorer competition for California posts each spring. The Sheriff's Explorers serve as role models for other youth during anti-gang and other presentations made by the Sheriff's Department in classrooms across the County. Many deputies started off as Explorers. However, youth with other career aspirations have also benefitted by the discipline, team and individual skill development that youth receive as Explorers.





## In Focus

**CBO's build relationships with communities they serve**

The typical patrol deputy in the Sheriff's Department has a lot of ground to cover. The average beat size is 250 square miles. Generally, patrol deputies are rushing to respond to calls for service from the general public. But for Dep. Jeff Garner, and the 13 other community-based deputies in the Department, life is different. These CBO's can concentrate on one or two communities.

"It gives the community a familiar face, someone they can address their concerns to," says Garner, 37, a six-year veteran of the Department. "A lot of people like that."

The Department uses grants from the federal Office on Community Oriented Policing Services to fund its CBO program. Deputies are assigned to rural communities across the County. They regularly visit with school officials, business owners, students, and other community members. Normally, residents would only see a deputy when he or she is responding to a crime.

"They get to know me better," Garner says of the CBO experience with residents. "So, it's easier to approach me."

As a consequence, CBO's pick up a lot of leads on criminal activity. Some they check out themselves. Others they pass along to drug, gang and other investigation units in the Department.

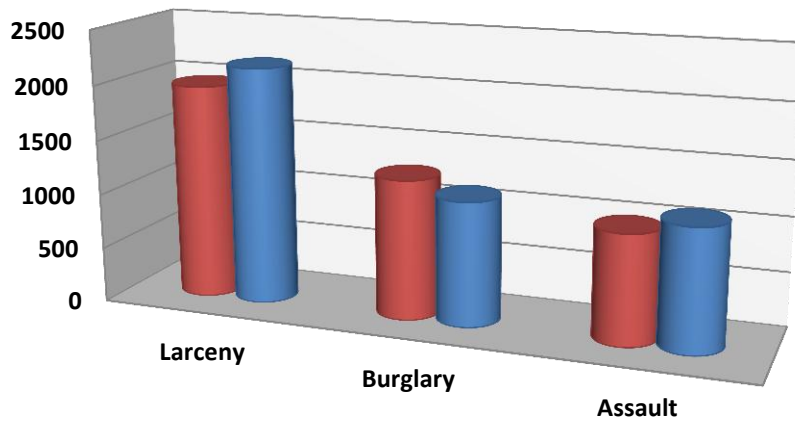
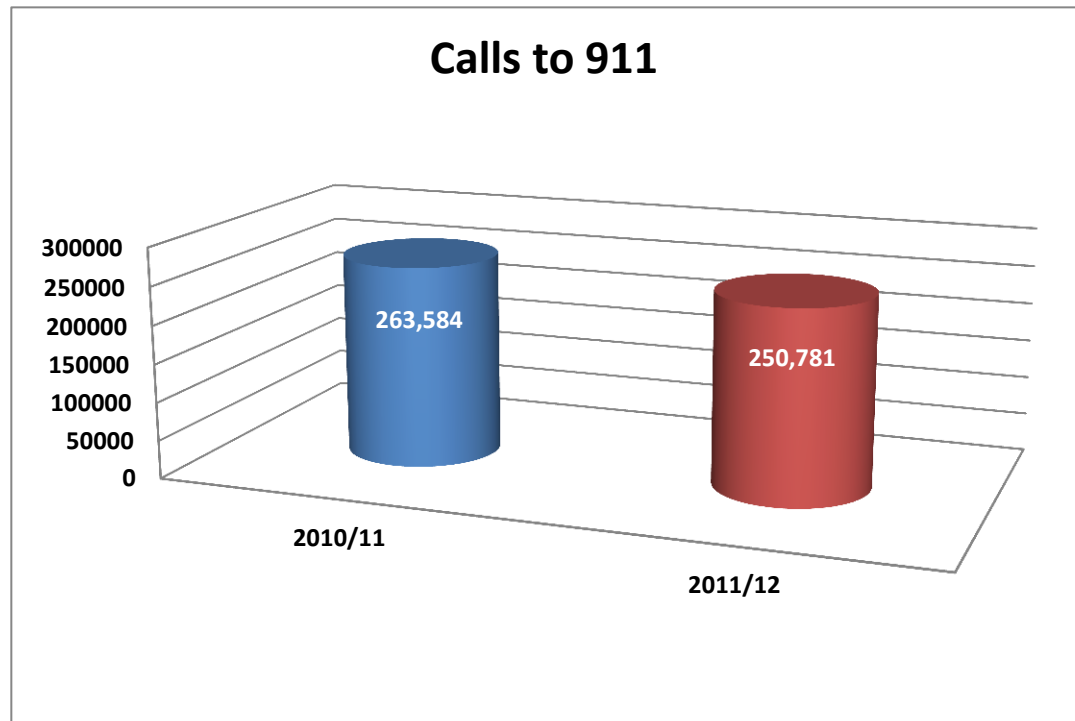
Detectives in those units often call CBO's during crime investigations to get perspectives on crime suspects living in their communities.

However, nabbing criminals is not the only job for CBO's. Crime prevention is a major role for them. The Department's community-based deputies give numerous public safety presentations at schools and other community venues on such topics as bullying, street gangs, and general crime prevention. Plus, they regular touch base with problem youngsters, encouraging them to stay away from trouble.

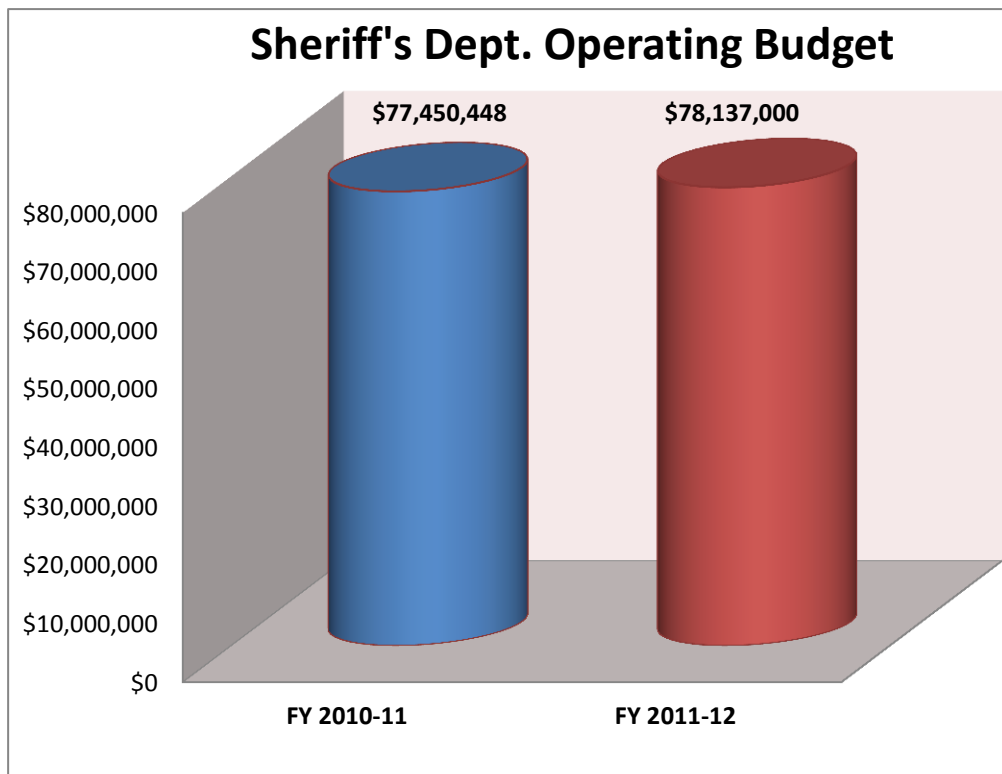
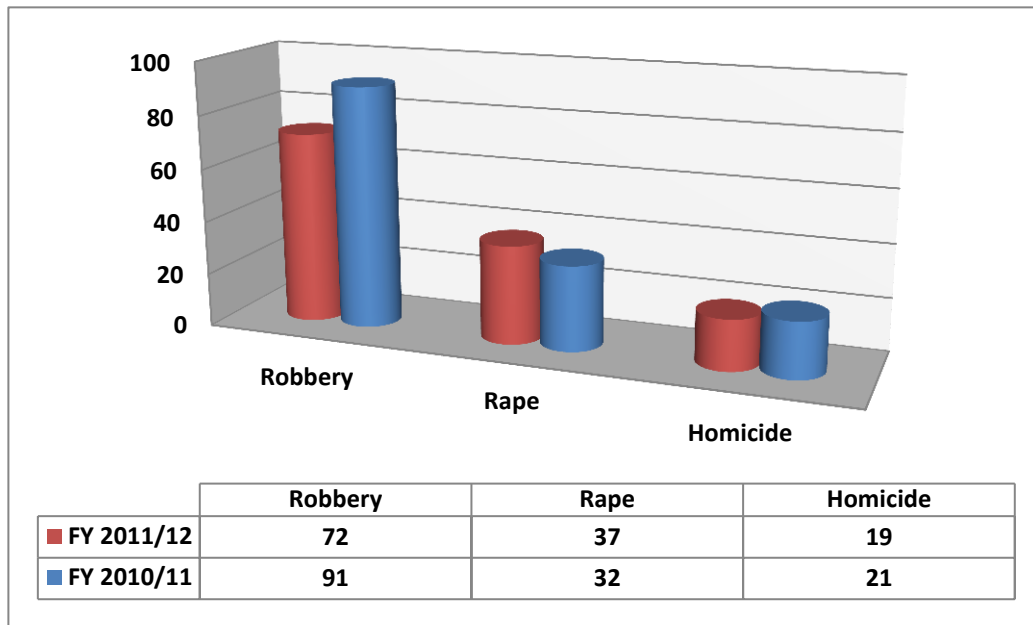


*Dep. Jeff Garner helps a young rider get adjusted to a new bike at the annual Sheriff's PAL bicycle give-away.*

## By the numbers ...



	Larceny	Burglary	Assault
FY 2011/12	1964	1272	995
FY 2010/11	2164	1132	1109



# Investigations

The Sheriff's Investigative Division collects evidence on serious crimes committed within the Department's jurisdiction. Capt. Michael Boudreaux heads the division. His management staff includes four lieutenants and 11 sergeants. The Division has 52 detectives and 15 support staff.



A Sheriff's detective performs evidence testing at a meth lab crime scene.

Division detectives interview victims, witnesses, and alleged perpetrators. The Department's Crime Lab sifts through fingerprints, traces of blood, and other evidence left at crime scenes. Division personnel work with other local, state, and federal agencies to solve crimes and bring perpetrators to justice.

The Investigations Division is divided into four main units: Crimes Against Persons; Gang Suppression; Narcotics; and Property / Agricultural Crimes.

The Division investigates everything from illegal drug deals to homicides to thefts of farm machinery. Here are the key units:

- **Crimes Against Persons:** The Sheriff's Crimes Against Persons department is made up of three separate units: Violent Crimes, Juvenile Crimes, and the Coroner's Unit.
  - **Violent Crimes:** This squad investigates homicides in the Sheriff's jurisdiction along with scores of other violent crimes against County residents and visitors,



such as assault and rape. There is a subunit with seasoned detectives devoted to solving “cold cases” that have eluded solution for years, or in some cases decades.

- **Juvenile Crime:** Detectives in the Juvenile squad investigate cases, often grisly, involving suspected child abuse, including physical abuse and neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation, at-risk missing or runaway juveniles, and other cases involving children.
- **Coroner’s Unit:** The final component of the Crimes Against Persons division is the Coroner’s Unit, probably the least understood branch of local law enforcement by the general public. The Coroner’s Unit role is to determine the mode and manner of all traumatic or unexpected deaths throughout the County. This includes homicides, drowning victims, suicides, stillborn children, traffic accident victims, and “natural causes,” among other violent or suspicious reasons for death. Many cases are determined not to be Coroner’s cases due to the fact that a physician was aware of the deceased condition and determined it was fatal. Two physicians perform autopsies for the Coroner’s Office in cases where the cause of death is not apparent, or to collect evidence for deaths caused by a crime, such as a homicide. The Office also determines suicide is the cause of death. With such a heavy workload of cases, the full-time staff of the Coroner’s Office is assisted during the evening hours by Patrol deputies, who start the paperwork on deaths caused by standard traffic accidents and natural causes.
- **Gangs:** The Gang Violence Suppression Unit reflects the Department’s strong commitment in curbing gang violence within the Sheriff’s jurisdiction. The unit is divided into North County (five detectives) and South County (four detectives) components. Also, the unit cooperates extensively with County, regional, and state law enforcement agencies on gang-related investigations. Under a state grant, the unit shares intelligence on gang members and activities via a password-protected Web site with regional law enforcement officers assigned to gang details. The Department also has worked closely with the Tulare County District Attorney’s Office in implementing “gang injunctions” in rural communities. The injunctions make it illegal for known gang members to associate with each other in public.
- **Narcotics and STEP:** Tulare County has several characteristics that make it ideal for people trafficking in illegal drugs. The County’s vast amount of federal lands (often rugged mountainous terrain) is favored by large-scale cultivators of illegal marijuana. Tulare County’s centralized location in California makes it a good hub to distribute marijuana and a variety of other illegal drugs on the West Coast. Finally, widespread poverty in the County translates to a ready market for methamphetamine, a devastating drug with a relatively cheap street price.



The Department battles the illegal drug trade with experienced investigators, collaborations with other law enforcement agencies, and a patchwork of local, state, and federal funds to finance enforcement operations. The Department's elite STEP team devotes a large portion of its time to eradication of illegal marijuana plants, particularly during the summer harvest season. The unit also responds to hostage calls and other major incidents around the County. There are several specialized units within the Sheriff's Narcotics department who track down, arrest, and testify in cases involving methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and other illegal drugs. These units collaborate with local police departments, federal anti-drug task forces, prosecutors, and other law enforcement professionals to bring drug cultivators and traffickers to justice. Unfortunately, these illegal drug operations do not exclusively include adults. The Department, in its drug enforcement actions, tries to protect children of meth addicts and drug users. Children are sometimes found by investigating officers in places where drugs are being produced or consumed by adults. When that is the case, the Department works closely with Child Welfare Services and other health-care agencies to remove the children from these toxic environments.

- **Property / Agricultural Crimes:** Most of the unit's cases involve property crimes, such as thefts and larcenies (thefts where no victim is present at the scene). A special squad focuses exclusively on agricultural crime. Assaults, domestic violence and the Department's Crime Lab, also fall under the Property Crimes umbrella.
  - **North and South County Investigations:** The general investigations unit of Property Crimes is divided into geographic divisions: North County and South County. The most common investigations for these detectives are armed robberies, assault with a deadly weapon, burglaries, elder abuse, embezzlement, fraud, fictitious checks, grand theft, identity theft, and rape. They also assist the Department's other investigative units, when necessary on cases.
  - **Agricultural Crimes:** This group investigates stolen farm chemicals, commodities, tractors and other farm equipment, vehicles, farm-related vandalism, and miscellaneous crime that occurs in the County's abundant and diverse agricultural industry (along with Fresno County, Tulare County regularly ranks among the top two agricultural counties in the United States). The squad works closely with the Tulare County District Attorney's Office, which provides funding for the group through a state grant.
  - **Domestic violence unit:** The Department has two federal grants to investigate cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, and related crimes. The Department's domestic violence detectives investigate or monitor every domestic violence case and follow it through the justice process. That amounts to hundreds of separate

cases. The Tulare District Attorney's Office and the Tulare County Probation Department also are key partners in these federal grant programs.

- **Crime Lab:** The Sheriff's Crime Lab assists all the Department's investigative units with collection and analysis of physical evidence in crimes. The unit is called out to crime scenes in the Sheriff's jurisdiction hundreds of times each year. They take photographs of each crime scene. They collect, bag, and label blood samples and other bits of evidence at the scenes, being careful not to leave any fibers from their clothing or otherwise compromise the scene. Back at the lab, the unit meticulously takes fingerprints off weapons, shards of glass or other evidence left at the scene. They properly prepare blood samples for DNA and blood typing by a California Department of Justice forensic laboratory. The unit works closely with Sheriff's detectives in putting together the jig-saw puzzle of individual cases leading to resolutions of individual crimes.

## In Focus

**Keeping a handle on illegal marijuana is a major job**

The Sheriff's SWAT team approaches an illegal marijuana grow site from the air (plants covered in netting in foreground).

Illegal marijuana has grown to a billion-dollar industry in Tulare County. Traditionally, the county's vast expanses of rural foothills and rugged mountainous terrain offer many locations where marijuana cultivators can tuck away plantations, each containing up to thousands of plants.

Recently, marijuana cultivators and traffickers have abused state and local medical marijuana laws to set up grow sites on the Valley floor. These

sites are in residential neighborhoods, on vacant tracks near schools, interspersed with legitimate crops, such as fruit trees, and sprinkled elsewhere throughout the County. These criminal enterprises typically post "recommendations" by unscrupulous physicians for medicinal marijuana at grow sites to make the operation appear legal.

The Sheriff's Department, with assistance from other County officials, has come up with procedures to separate legitimate medicinal marijuana operations from criminal enterprises masquerading as legal undertakings.

Typically, each of these Valley grow sites contains hundreds of illegal marijuana plants. A single mature marijuana plant can yield a minimum of two to three pounds of buds (which contain the plant's mind-altering ingredient). Each pound of these buds commands several thousand dollars in the illegal marijuana market. Thus, each of these grow sites becomes a million-dollar criminal enterprise as the plants grow to full height.

Of course, battling the problem of illegal marijuana has become a huge undertaking for law enforcement. Informants, a variety of aerial reconnaissance, pain-staking investigations, and surmounting thorny obstacles (if applicable) of medical marijuana laws are involved before law enforcement shows up at a grow site to confiscate illegal marijuana.

*Story continued on next page*

In addition, removing marijuana plants from a site containing hundreds or even thousands of plants becomes a true industrial operation. Chain saws, heavy-duty pruning shears, front-end loaders, and dump trucks are among the equipment used to remove the plants from crime scenes.

The Sheriff's Department also teams up with other law enforcement groups to share resources in battling illegal marijuana. The South Valley Marijuana Suppression Program, for example, is a partnership of the Sheriff's departments in Tulare and Fresno counties, and district attorney offices in both counties. The team has eradicated hundreds of thousands of illegal marijuana plants in the past two years, and put dozens of marijuana cultivators and traffickers behind bars.



This is the illegal marijuana complex seen from the air in the first photo. The Sheriff's Department estimates that, in the past couple of years, hundreds of these operations have been established in the County on the Valley floor. An average grow site contains hundreds of marijuana plants. Each plant contains several pounds of the active ingredient of marijuana. Each pound is worth several thousands of dollars on the open market. Thus, a complex such as the one above can generate millions of dollars in revenue for drug traffickers.



# Detentions / Administration

Detentions is the largest branch of the Sheriff's Department. The Detentions branch operates four jails, inmate programs, a variety of alternatives-to-custody programs, security for the Tulare County court system, and the Sheriff's Farm. A majority of employees for the Sheriff's Department work in Detentions.



The Sheriff's Department operates four jails: Main Jail in Visalia, Bob Wiley Detention Facility, Men's Correctional Facility, and the Adult Pre-Trial Detention Facility at Sequoia Field north of Visalia.

Detentions is divided into Administration and Operations (covered in the next chapter). Detentions Administration is under the leadership of Capt. Robin Skiles. His management staff includes two lieutenants and six sergeants.

Here are more details of units within Detention Administration:

- **Court Services:** The unit ensures the safety of attorneys, witnesses, defendants, jurors, and the general public at locations for the Tulare County Superior Court system. The system's largest courthouse (more than a dozen court-rooms) is located at the County Civic Center complex in Visalia. Superior Court satellite locations are in Tulare, Porterville, Dinuba, and Pre-Trial Detention Facility at Sequoia Field. The Department also provides security for the court system's Juvenile Justice Court at Sequoia Field and

for Family Support Services in Visalia. During 2010, Court Services conducted 901,353 security screenings with metal detectors at these courts. The unit also escorted thousands of inmates to County courtrooms for hearings, trials, and legal motions. Court Services performs its duties under a state contract, which pays the salaries of unit staff.

- **Civil:** The Civil unit serves a variety of court documents on a fee basis for the general public – including bank levies, civil warrants, eviction notices, and summons and complaints. The Civil unit is self-supporting from this fee income.
- **Farm:** The Sheriff's Farm is a major reason the Department is able to keep tight controls on foodservice costs for inmates and correctional staff. The farm, located adjacent to the Department's Sequoia Field detentions complex, grows everything from garden vegetables to beef cattle. Food processors and non-profits organizations also donate commodities to the Department.
- **Inmate Programs:** The Sheriff's Department operates a variety of programs geared to nurture educational, vocational and emotional development of inmates. Inmates choose whether to participate in the programs. The idea with all this coursework and hands-on activities is to prepare inmates to adjust better when they re-enter regular life after incarceration and to, hopefully, not re-offend and return to jail. In large part, these programs are funded by the inmates themselves – through profits on commissary purchases, telephone fees, and other assessments. The unit also receives grants to operate special programs. An example is the Department's long-standing Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) Program. It's a residential program and inmates must commit to stay in the program a minimum of five months. RSAT is designed to develop the inmate's cognitive, behavioral, social, vocational, and other skills to solve substance abuse and other problems. Alternative Services, a drug counseling services, supervises RSAT by contract with the Department. In other classes and workshops, inmates can earn a high school equivalency diploma, work on anger management, learn to live without drugs, become a certified fork-lift operator, or become better parents. The Sisterhood of Grace, a local non-profit organization, offers group and individual counseling for women inmates at Bob Wiley Detention Facility. The volunteer teaching staff concentrates on building skills to help these women overcome personal obstacles to lower their chances of re-offending and returning to jail. When each participating inmate is nearing release from jail, the Sisterhood works with an extensive network of public agencies and non-profit organizations to line up needed services to increase the inmate's chance of successfully reintegrating into society.



## In Focus

### State Realignment crowds County jails with inmates

Under court order to reduce overpopulation in the State Prison System, California implemented AB 109 on October 1, 2011. The legislation, also known as State Public Safety Realignment, requires that offenders convicted of certain non-violent, non-serious, and non-sex offenses will serve sentences in county jails instead of state prison. The law also stipulates that many former state prisoners violating terms of their parole will be sent to jail rather than back to prison.

AB 109 has filled County jails across the state. The Tulare County Jail System has four jails. One, the Adult Pre-Trial Detention Facility, had hundreds of empty cells last fall when the flow of AB 109 offenders started. However, by the end of 2011-12 fiscal year on June 30, 2012, Pre-Trial and the rest of the County's Jail System was virtually full. To cope with the new inmates, the Department has expanded alternative-to-incarceration programs, where low-level offenders perform Sheriff-supervised voluntary labor instead of being locked up. The Department also is working with Probation and other County agencies to expand or create other alternatives to incarceration.

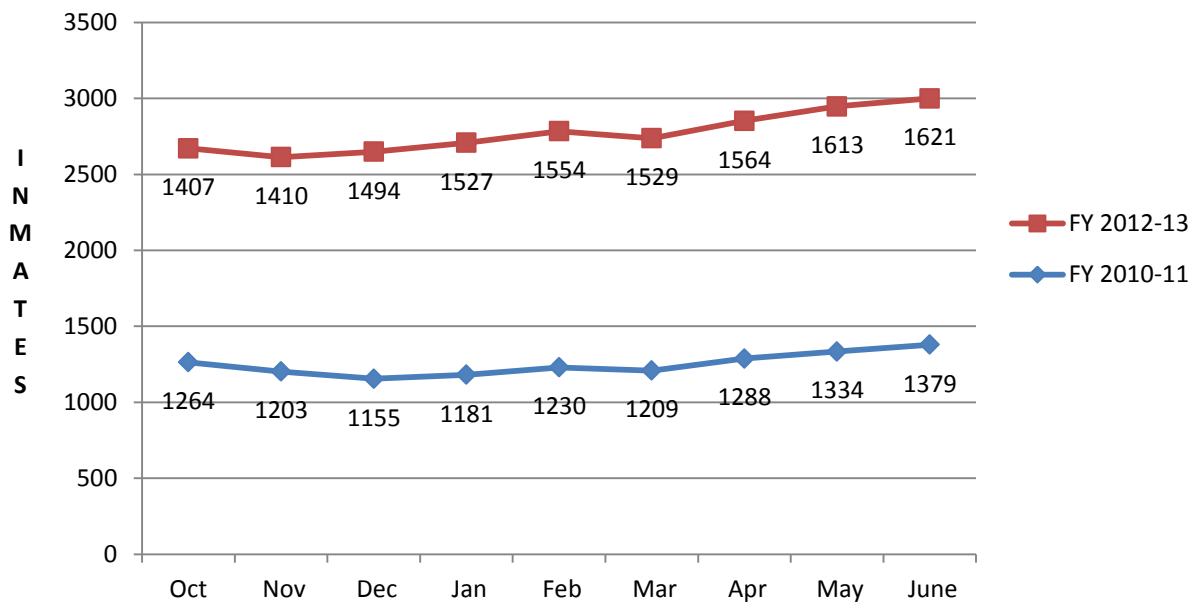


*In Focus article continued on next page*

Help is on the way long-term. The County was awarded a \$60 million grant in April 2012 to build a 500-bed jail in Porterville. The facility will be located near the state courthouse under construction. The facility will increase overall capacity in the County jail system to assist in housing AB 109 inmates as well as additional offenders due to County population growth. The jail also will result in annual savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Sheriff's Department in transporting inmates to court appearances for south county inmates, and reduce travel time and air pollution from thousands of inmate visits each year by family members, defense attorneys, bail bondsmen, and others.

Unfortunately, the new jail is not expected to open until 2018. That means that the Department will have to continue to be creative to cope with a rising inmate population during the interim.

### Impact of AB 109 on County Jail System Population

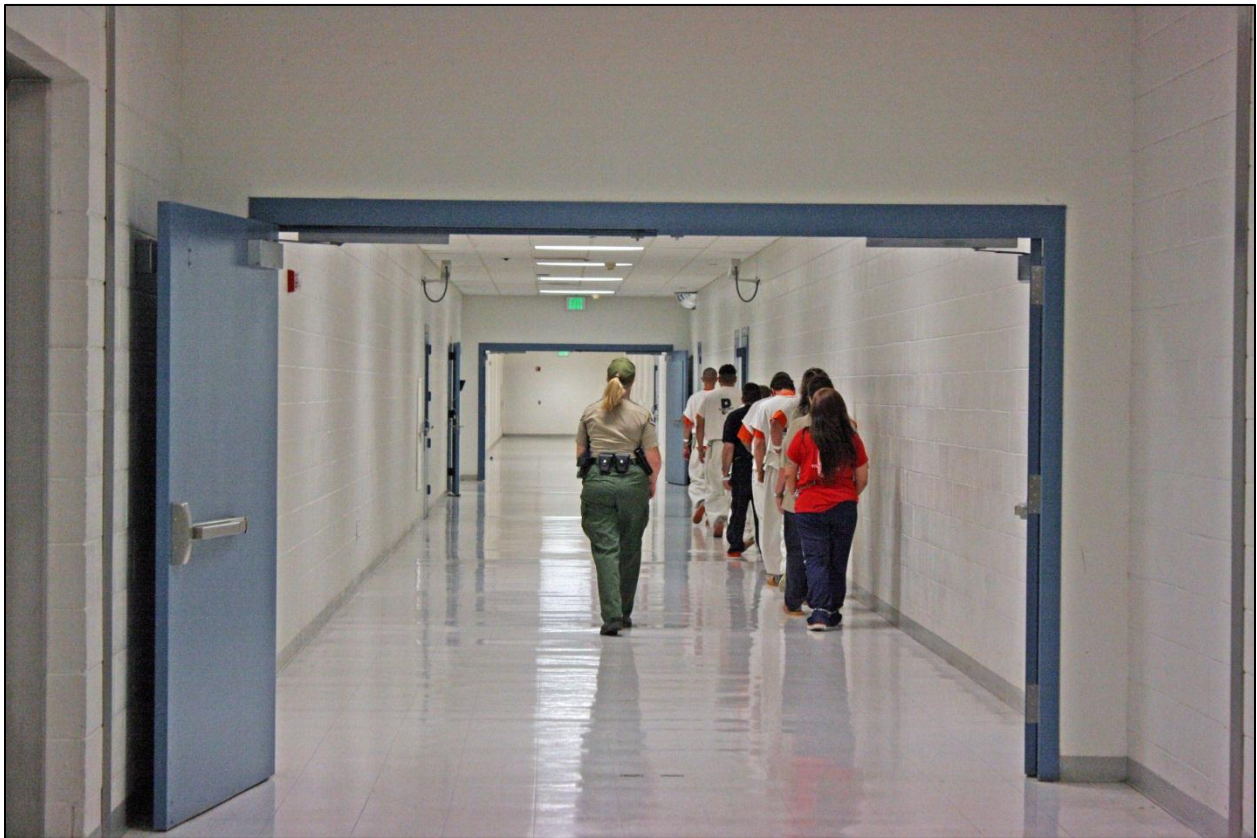


**Note:** AB 109 implemented in Oct. 1, 2011.

# Detentions / Operations

Day-to-day management of the County's Jail System falls under the Department's Detention Operations division.

The Department receives and processes people arrested for crimes by Sheriff's deputies, along with officers of the County's eight municipal police departments, the California Highway Patrol, and local law enforcement task forces. The County has four jails operated by the Department. That includes three jails at the County's Sequoia Field complex in rural northern Tulare County and a fourth jail adjacent to the Tulare County Superior Courthouse in Visalia.



**Correctional deputies supervised, on average, more than 1,500 inmates per day during FY 2011-12.**

The division commander is Capt. Keith Douglass. His management staff includes four lieutenants and 28 sergeants.

Here are some key components:

- **Jail system:** The Department operates Main Jail in Visalia, and the Bob Wiley Detection Facility, the Pre-Trial Detention Facility, and the Men's Correctional Facility (MCF) at the County's Sequoia Field complex in rural northern Tulare County.

- **Alternative sentencing programs:** The Sheriff's Department operates several alternative-to-incarceration programs – the Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (SWAP), the Day Reporting Center (DRC), and Weekender (WE). These programs are open on a volunteer or court-ordered basis to non-violent inmates who meet the qualifications of each program. DRC is designed for indigent inmates. Weekender participants are ordered to do so by the court. Weekender, by the way, was originally constructed for work projects on weekends only. Now, those projects can be any day of the week. For both DRC and Weekender, inmates perform lawn maintenance and general labor duties around Sheriff's facilities at Sequoia Field and the Department's substations. SWAP originated to allow inmates to continue to support their families by participating in County work projects at times that does not conflict with paid employment. The SWAP workers, like their DRC and Weekender counterparts, perform general labor duties on work assignments. But those assignments can be at any of 40 work sites at government agencies and non-profit organizations around the County. SWAP workers pay to participate in the program, and thus help the Sheriff's Department defray supervision costs. By law, DRC participants do not pay to take part in the program. Weekender participants pay to participate at rates determined by the court system.
- **Cal-ID:** The Sheriff's Department participates in this state-wide program sponsored by the California Department of Justice. The Department's Cal-ID fingerprint technician is stationed at the Sheriff's crime lab. She meticulously checks palm prints and fingerprints from evidence collected at crime scenes by Sheriff's deputies and detectives. The technician matches these prints from fingerprint databases at the Department and the DOJ for possible matches. In certain cases, she also will check the crime scene prints against those of a suspect identified during the investigation of the crime but whose prints are not yet included in the local or state databases. It's challenging to get conclusive prints at crime scenes for these print comparisons, however. That has to do with how the suspect handled the evidence in question and the item's surface. Smooth, shiny objects, such as glass, often yield good prints. By contrast, it's difficult to get useable prints from a rough, or textured, surface.
- **Engraving:** The Sheriff's engraving unit makes plaques, trophies, awards, and other engraved items for government agencies and non-profit organizations. The unit makes decals for the Sheriff's patrol cars and other vehicles. The engraving unit uses inmate labor, building post-custody job skills in the process.

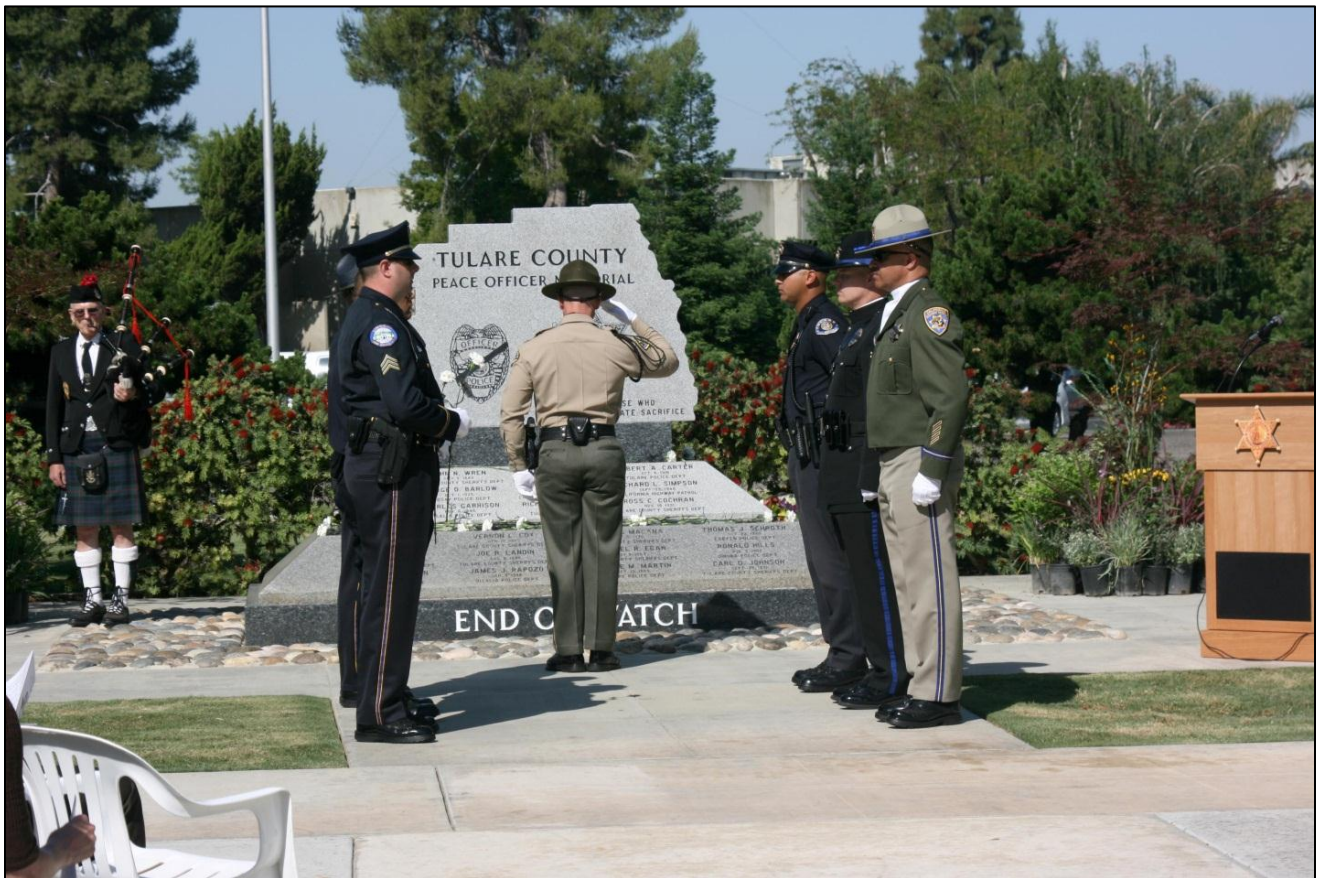


# End of Watch



Each May, local law enforcement officers, families and friends stop to reflect on the dozens of Tulare County peace officers who have died in the line of duty. That includes 12 Sheriff's deputies. The last to die was Sheriff's Sgt. Greg Hernandez, who died on Feb. 6, 2009, as a result of injuries he sustained when his patrol car collided with a tractor-trailer in rural northern Tulare County. The sergeant was hurrying to assist at a crime scene. The Tulare County Peace Officer Memorial, adjacent to Main Jail, is the scene of the annual remembrance.

While the ceremony to honor these exemplary peace officers occurs once a year, their service inspires today's law enforcement officers every day.



# Contact Us

## Communications Center (24 hours a day)

- Emergency: 911
- Non-emergency: 800-808-0488

## Anonymous Tips on Crimes (24 hours a day)

- 559-725-4194
- [tcsso@tipnow.com](mailto:tcsso@tipnow.com)

## Business Office

- 559-636-4628
- 2404 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia, CA 93291

## Civil Division

- 559-636-5090
- 221 S. Mooney Blvd., Room 102, Visalia, CA 93291

## Bob Wiley Detention Center

- 559-735-1700
- 36712 Road 112, Visalia, CA 93291

## Men's Correctional Facility

- 559-735-1650
- 36008 Road 112, Visalia, CA 93291

## Adult Pre-Trial Detention Facility

- 559-735-1750
- 36650 Road 112, Visalia, CA 93291

## Main Jail

- 559-636-4655
- 2404 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia, CA 93291

## Sheriff / Department Administrative Center

- 559-636-4625
- 2404 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia, CA 93291
- Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays (closed holidays)



Media Inquiries

- 559-735-1832

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